

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of helping a user perform tasks in software, said method

5 comprising:

rendering a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second plurality of elements are visibly displayed regardless of which task is being performed and wherein an element is either active or inactive, wherein user selection of an element with said
10 element active initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said element with said element inactive does not initiate said action;

activating a first portion of said first plurality of graphic elements; and

activating a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic
15 elements, wherein said tasks are to be performed in a logical order and wherein said second portion is selectively activated to guide said user through said tasks according to said logical order.

2. The method of Claim 1 wherein said first plurality of graphic

20 elements comprises elements that are active regardless of which task is being performed.

3. The method of Claim 1 wherein elements in said first portion are selectively activated to guide said user through said tasks according to said logical order.

5 4. The method of Claim 1 wherein elements in said second portion are activated in response to user selection of an element from said first portion.

5. The method of Claim 1 wherein said tasks comprise tasks for designing a microcontroller.

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6. The method of Claim 5 wherein said microcontroller is designed according to a programmable system on chip architecture.

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7. The method of Claim 1 wherein said first plurality of graphic elements comprises icons organized in a first toolbar and said second plurality of graphic elements comprises icons organized in a second toolbar.

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8. The method of Claim 1 wherein said first and second plurality of graphic elements are displayed in an order corresponding to said logical order.

9. The method of Claim 1 wherein selected windows are displayed in response to user selection of an element.

10. The method of Claim 1 wherein a first element for a first task and a second element for a second task are active at the same time, wherein according to said logical order there are intervening tasks between said first and second tasks, and wherein movement between said first task and said second task is accomplished without movement through said intervening tasks in response to user selection of said first and second elements.

11. A computer system comprising:
a bus;
a display device coupled to said bus;
a memory unit coupled to said bus; and
a processor coupled to said bus, said processor for executing a method of helping a user perform tasks in software, said method comprising:
rendering on said display device a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second plurality of elements are visibly displayed regardless of which task is being performed and wherein an element is either active or inactive, wherein user selection of an element with said element active initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said element with said element inactive does not initiate said action;
activating a first portion of said first plurality of graphic elements;
and

activating a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic elements, wherein said tasks are to be performed in a logical order and wherein said second portion is selectively activated to guide said user through said tasks according to said logical order.

12. The computer system of Claim 11 wherein said first plurality of graphic elements comprises elements that are active regardless of which task is being performed.

13. The computer system of Claim 11 wherein elements in said first portion are selectively activated to guide said user through said tasks according to said logical order.

14. The computer system of Claim 11 wherein elements in said second portion are activated in response to user selection of an element from said first portion.

15. The computer system of Claim 11 wherein said tasks comprise tasks for designing a microcontroller.

16. The computer system of Claim 15 wherein said microcontroller is designed according to a programmable system on chip architecture.

17. The computer system of Claim 11 wherein said first plurality of graphic elements comprises icons organized in a first toolbar and said second plurality of graphic elements comprises icons organized in a second toolbar.

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18. The computer system of Claim 11 wherein said graphic elements are displayed in an order corresponding to said logical order.

10 19. The computer system of Claim 11 wherein selected windows are displayed in response to user selection of an element.

15 20. The computer system of Claim 11 wherein a first element for a first task and a second element for a second task are active at the same time, wherein according to said logical order there are intervening tasks between said first and second tasks, and wherein movement between said first task and said second task is accomplished without movement through said intervening tasks in response to user selection of said first and second elements.

20 21. A computer-usable medium having computer-readable program code embodied therein for causing a computer system to perform a method of helping a user perform tasks in software, said method comprising:

rendering a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second plurality of elements are visibly

displayed regardless of which task is being performed and wherein an element is either active or inactive, wherein user selection of an element with said element active initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said element with said element inactive does not initiate said action;

5 activating a first portion of said first plurality of graphic elements; and
 activating a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic elements, wherein said tasks are to be performed in a logical order and wherein said second portion is selectively activated to guide said user through said
10 tasks according to said logical order.

22. The computer-usable medium of Claim 21 wherein said first plurality of graphic elements comprises elements that are active regardless of which task is being performed.

15 23. The computer-usable medium of Claim 21 wherein elements in said first portion are selectively activated to guide said user through said tasks according to said logical order.

20 24. The computer-usable medium of Claim 21 wherein elements in said second portion are activated in response to user selection of an element from said first portion.

25. The computer-usable medium of Claim 21 wherein said tasks comprise tasks for designing a microcontroller.

26. The computer-usable medium of Claim 25 wherein said
5 microcontroller is designed according to a programmable system on chip architecture.

27. The computer-usable medium of Claim 21 wherein said first
plurality of graphic elements comprises icons organized in a first toolbar and
10 said second plurality of graphic elements comprises icons organized in a second toolbar.

28. The computer-usable medium of Claim 21 wherein said graphic
elements are displayed in an order corresponding to said logical order.
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29. The computer-usable medium of Claim 21 wherein selected windows are displayed in response to user selection of an element.

30. The computer-usable medium of Claim 21 wherein a first element
20 for a first task and a second element for a second task are active at the same time, wherein according to said logical order there are intervening tasks between said first and second tasks, and wherein movement between said first task and said second task is accomplished without movement through said

intervening tasks in response to user selection of said first and second elements.

31. A graphical user interface (GUI) for helping a user perform tasks in software, said GUI comprising:

a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second plurality of elements are visibly displayed regardless of which task is being performed and wherein an element is either active or inactive, wherein user selection of an element with said element active initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said element with said element inactive does not initiate said action;

wherein a first portion of said first plurality of graphic elements are activated; and

wherein a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements are activated in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic elements, wherein said tasks are to be performed in a logical order and wherein said second portion is selectively activated to guide said user through said tasks according to said logical order.

32. The GUI of Claim 31 wherein said first plurality of graphic elements comprises elements that are active regardless of which task is being performed.

33. The GUI of Claim 31 wherein elements in said first portion are selectively activated to guide said user through said tasks according to said logical order.

5 34. The GUI of Claim 31 wherein said tasks comprise tasks for designing a microcontroller according to a programmable system on a chip architecture.

10 35. The GUI of Claim 31 wherein said first plurality of graphic elements comprises icons organized in a first toolbar and said second plurality of graphic elements comprises icons organized in a second toolbar.

15 36. The GUI of Claim 31 wherein said graphic elements are displayed in an order corresponding to said logical order.

37. The GUI of Claim 31 further comprising windows selectively displayed in response to user selection of an element.